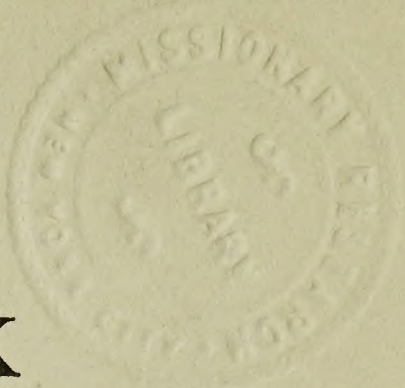


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Russell Sage



PLAN OF NEW YORK
AND ITS ENVIRONS

THE MEETING OF MAY 10, 1922



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SPEAKERS

ROBERT W. DE FOREST
CHARLES D. NORTON
HERBERT HOOVER
JOHN J. CARTY
LILLIAN D. WALD
ELIHU ROOT
CHARLES DANA GIBSON
MRS. AUGUST BELMONT

COMMITTEE

CHARLES D. NORTON, *Chairman*
ROBERT W. DE FOREST JOHN M. GLENN
FREDERIC A. DELANO DWIGHT W. MORROW
FRANK L. POLK

FREDERICK P. KEPPEL, *Secretary*
FLAVEL SHURTLEFF, *Asst. Secretary*

130 East Twenty-second Street
New York

THE CALL FOR THE MEETING

THE problems created by the concentration of population in and about the City of New York are growing daily in seriousness and are engaging the attention of an increasing number of our citizens. The Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation, organized for the improvement of social and living conditions, have appointed to consider the subject, a Committee consisting of CHARLES D. NORTON, Chairman, ROBERT W. DE FOREST, FREDERIC A. DELANO, JOHN M. GLENN, DWIGHT W. MORROW and FRANK L. POLK. But for his untimely death, ALFRED T. WHITE, who was actively interested, would also have been a member. FREDERICK P. KEPPEL has been named as secretary and FLAVEL SHURTLEFF as assistant secretary of this Committee.

Substantial progress has already been made in the organization of a series of basic studies looking forward to the formulation and promotion, in cooperation with all concerned, of a regional Plan of New York and its Environs. It is now desired to hold an informal conference of those who are naturally interested, the public officials, architects, engineers, artists, city planning experts and other public-spirited men and women who in their own special fields and in their own localities are already facing these problems. After consultation with ELIHU ROOT, HERBERT HOOVER, ALFRED E. SMITH and a number of others who have already promised their cooperation, a meeting at which a preliminary report will be presented and discussed has been arranged for 8:15 P.M., May 10, 1922, in the auditorium of the Engineering Societies Building, 33 West 39th Street. You are cordially invited to attend this meeting.

Will you be kind enough to let me know by a reply on the enclosed card addressed to 130 East 22nd Street, whether we may count upon your presence on this occasion, which we trust will prove to be the inaugural step in a movement of far-reaching importance for our community?

Trustees Russell Sage Foundation

ROBERT W. DE FOREST, *President*

FREDERIC A. DELANO	CHARLES D. NORTON
JOHN H. FINLEY	GERTRUDE S. RICE
JOHN M. GLENN	LOUISA LEE SCHUYLER
DWIGHT W. MORROW	HELEN GOULD SHEPARD

The Meeting of May 10, 1922

ROBERT W. DE FOREST, *Presiding, said:*

THE purpose of this meeting is to tell those whom we have invited to meet with us this evening what the Russell Sage Foundation is doing to develop a comprehensive regional plan of New York and its vicinity, and to invite their cooperation.

For more than a year the Sage Foundation has given serious consideration to this subject. In doing so it has sought and obtained, confidentially, suggestions and advice from a number of people. It now wishes to broaden the circle of its advisers. Moreover, this project of the Foundation is already confidentially known to so many that it must inevitably soon become public. Its scope should be authoritatively declared, so as to avoid any possible misapprehension.

This authoritative declaration will be made by Mr. Charles D. Norton, Chairman of the Committee on Plan of New York and Its Environs. I shall not duplicate or qualify his announcement. I shall confine what I say by way of introduction to answering one or two questions that may at once suggest themselves to this audience, and by emphasizing one or two parts of our program.

The first question you may instinctively ask is whether it is not a project far beyond the resources of the Foundation. Unquestionably it is, if the Foundation alone is expected to carry this project to fruition. All that the Foundation can wisely do is to outline an initial plan in reliance on the cooperation of others to perfect it and carry it out.

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Another question which may be properly asked is whether any such plan can be carried out without the action of public authorities, city and state, and this question may lead to another as to why some of the public officials, of at least the larger cities concerned, should not be members of any committee on this subject. Unquestionably, no such plan can be carried out except by and through the public authorities, but the Foundation has thought it unfair to these authorities to involve them in a plan at the present time. Ultimately any plan must be presented to these authorities for modification, acceptance or rejection. These authorities to perform their proper functions as representing the people should be left at this initial stage in an absolutely judicial position. They should not be now embarrassed by being asked to take any leading part, nor should the Foundation and its advisers be now embarrassed by any personal or political considerations.

A few words as to emphasis: To most people a City Plan suggests nothing more than streets, open spaces and buildings, and is perhaps limited to what may be called the "city beautiful." While the project of the Sage Foundation unquestionably includes streets, open spaces and buildings, and would not ignore the element of beauty, its emphasis will be laid according to the Foundation's charter on "The Improvement of Social and Living Conditions." It is that plan which makes the city a better place to live in and a better place to work in that most interests the Sage Foundation.

The project of the Foundation, while not ignoring congested Manhattan and almost equally congested Brooklyn, involves a regional Plan of New York and includes not only Greater New York but its Environs. With present methods of transportation, the real New York includes every locality within easy commuting

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or motor distance and embraces parts of the states of New Jersey and Connecticut. It is perhaps in these environs that city planning has its greatest opportunity.

Announcement of project, by CHARLES D. NORTON:

The present street plan of Manhattan Island was designed by Commissioners GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, SIMEON DE WITT and JOHN RUTHERFORD in 1811, when New York had a population of less than 90,000.

In the report of the 1811 Commission we find the following:

" * * It may be a subject of merriment that the commissioners have provided space for a greater population than is collected at any spot on this side of China. * * * It is not improbable that considerable numbers may be collected at Haerlem before the high hills to the southward of it shall be built upon as a city, and it is improbable that (for centuries to come) the grounds north of Haerlem flat will be covered with houses. * * **

"It may be matter of surprise that so few vacant spaces have been left and those so small; for the benefit of fresh air and consequent preservation of health. Certainly if the City of New York were destined to stand on the side of a small stream such as the Seine or the Thames, a great number of ample places might be needful; but those large arms of the sea which embrace Manhattan Island render its situation, in regard to health and pleasure, as well as to convenience of commerce, peculiarly felicitous; when therefore, from the same causes, the price of land is so uncommonly great, it seemed proper to admit the principles of economy to greater influence than might, under circumstances of a different kind, have consisted with the dictates of prudence and the sense of duty."

These "principles of economy" applied to Manhattan Island in 1811 have yielded their logical and disastrous harvest of congestion and confusion in 1922. Embraced by "those large arms of the sea," rigidly bound to a street scheme designed in 1811, Manhattan has

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leaped into the air; it has tunneled and bridged the rivers; it has thrust out its transportation arms until men and women travel fifty miles to their daily labor in the city; until the great area of which Manhattan is the center is in 1922 the home of no less than nine millions of people. Deep-seated structural defects leave masses of this population in an environment ill suited for human happiness and welfare. Traffic in existing streets is congested to the point where it places intolerable burdens upon commerce and endangers human life. Although the public, the liberal press, the engineering and artistic professions have repeatedly voiced the need, there exists no comprehensive regional Plan of New York and its wide Environs. Many admirable local plans have been developed, but no inspiring vision of the far future guides us in our present expenditures of money and of civic effort. Without a guiding Plan, what of New York one hundred years hence? Momentous decisions are being constantly made, decisions that are local, piecemeal and unrelated to the larger trends. The time has come for unified planning in the interest of the whole people.

Unhampered by the fears of the Commissioners of 1811, lest their plans become "subject of merriment" if too large an area were included, all of the communities in which people make their homes who gain their daily livelihood in New York, from the New Jersey shore, through Princeton, to West Point, and Bridgeport, and including all of Long Island, will recognize their common interest in comprehensive planning; will share a common wish to make of New York and its Environs a better place in which to work and to live. Precisely as a family rejoices in the development and embellishment of its home, so our citizens and their children's children will watch with deepest satisfaction the gradual development of their fair Estate, of New York and its Environs, in accordance with some cherished Plan.

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City Planning requires imagination, it requires vision; it requires a long continuing study of facts, and it costs a substantial sum of money. There is no public treasury which can be drawn upon to create such a Plan, for no one governmental agency has jurisdiction over all of that area which includes portions of three states and many municipalities.

The Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation, organized for the improvement of social and living conditions—mindful of the explicit request in Mrs. Sage's deed of gift, that a portion of the income be applied exclusively for the benefit of New York City and vicinity, and desiring to serve the public interest—have made an appropriation which, together with a large number of contributions from interested citizens, will provide a sum sufficient to meet the necessary expense of developing a comprehensive regional Plan of New York and its Environs. They have appointed a Committee consisting of CHARLES D. NORTON, Chairman, ROBERT W. DE FOREST, FREDERIC A. DELANO, JOHN M. GLENN, DWIGHT W. MORROW and FRANK L. POLK, to organize the work and to that end to cooperate with groups of citizens and public officials in the boroughs, municipalities and local communities throughout the whole area.

But for his untimely death, Alfred T. White, who was actively interested in the project, would have been a member of the Committee.

Avoiding duplication of effort, the Committee propose to approach their difficult problem by first organizing a series of preliminary inquiries with a view to developing and recording those basic facts and fundamental considerations which are requisite to inform public opinion and to guide the future city planners. There will be organized at least four such inquiries, as follows:

1. ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRIAL: An analysis of the fundamental reasons for the existence of this great center of industry and commerce, its potentialities and the sound limitations on its future

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development; an inquiry into economic and occupational activities, those that create populous districts and those that follow population; a study of the land within the area, its use and taxation.

2. **PHYSICAL:** The mapping of existing topographical and other physical conditions, including railway and water transportation, harbor, "free port" and terminal facilities, bridges, ferries, main highways, park and recreation spaces, public and quasi-public buildings, and density and distribution of day and night population; the compiling of existing local schemes for improvement.

3. **LEGAL:** A study of existing law as it controls or affects a Plan for the area which includes portions of three states; an analysis of the law of zoning, excess condemnation, stabilization of official city maps, shore rights and land under water, and other subjects relating to City Planning.

4. **SOCIAL AND LIVING CONDITIONS:** Studies designed to bring to the attention of the city planners those factors which have direct bearing upon human values and social welfare, and make for healthful and satisfactory housing and home surroundings, efficient work and wholesome leisure time.

After these inquiries have laid solid foundations upon which to base sound planning, the man, or the group of men, will be found to plan for New York and its Environs as George Washington and Pierre l'Enfant planned for Washington, or Burnham and Bennett and their committees of business men planned for Chicago; to create a Plan which, with wide public participation and approval, shall embody and record the best thought of our engineers, our artists and architects, our public servants, our social workers and economists, and far-seeing business men.

Plans, when sufficiently advanced, will be submitted to the public at large for study and criticism through groups of citizens representative of each community in the great area involved. They will be

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offered in no arbitrary spirit, but rather in the faith that the public will welcome comprehensive planning, and will endeavor through the proper public authorities and citizen organizations to realize to the utmost, as the decades pass, the social, the industrial, the commercial and the artistic values of this great world capital and port.

The Committee will propose no abnormal expansion of public expenditure. With a wisely conceived Plan public funds which will be expended in any event can be directed into projects of permanent constructive value; without a Plan millions are likely to be wasted in desultory or ill-considered public works.

This project is presented for the first time to this representative conference of public officials, engineers, architects, artists and other public-spirited citizens, for here it is that we must find the love of order and of beauty, the lofty vision, and the skilled hands which shall depict for a vast population the dramatic and stirring possibilities of the centuries to come.

MR. NORTON *added*:

The Committee is faced with this dilemma. Desiring the co-operation of many people in many communities, early and frank announcement of the project is necessary; but the method chosen to approach the problem, while sound and original in planning ventures, is necessarily slow and laborious. Enlisting as we do the ablest men and women, who are always the busiest people, these inquiries cannot be hastened.

There is danger lest the mere announcement of the project arouse too great expectations of immediate results, expectations which at best cannot be realized until after much study and the lapse of considerable time.

It is, however, perfectly fair to ask what the Committee has done and in detail how they propose to proceed.

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For more than a year the Physical Survey has been under way. With a staff of engineers assisting him, Nelson P. Lewis, former Chief Engineer, Board of Estimate and Apportionment, City of New York, and former President of the National City Planning Conference, has been studying the density and trends of population, mapping the whole area and learning what public officials and engineers are doing, or can do, in the development of forest reserves, parks, playgrounds as well as in the development of railroad, port, harbor and transit facilities. Mr. Lewis has the aid and advice among others of D. L. Turner, B. F. Cresson, Jr., Jay Downer, Morris R. Sherrerd, Frederic Law Olmsted and George C. Whipple.

Incidentally, with the aid of a special group including William Adams Delano, Jules Guerin, Isaiah Bowman, George D. Pratt and Sherman Fairchild, Mr. Lewis will endeavor to develop a new type of map for city planners, in which the painter with his mastery of arrangement and of color, will be guided by the accurate contours of the engineer and the new viewpoint of the aerial photographer.

The Legal Inquiry has been under way for six months under the direction of Edward M. Bassett, former Chairman, Zoning Commission of New York and present counsel, Zoning Committee, aided by Frank B. Williams, legal investigator in city planning, who is giving his entire time. Interesting legal questions arise. What planning powers are lacking in the various communities? How can they effectively cooperate with each other? Is the public ownership of aqueduct, water supply and canal lands such that future populations can enjoy them as open places? How far can zoning be adopted by areas outside of cities? To what extent can ungranted foreshore and land under water, now owned by the states, be preserved for future recreational use? How can

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official highway and park layouts, especially in sparsely populated districts, be created and stabilized? Mr. Bassett's advisers include James Byrne, President, Association of the Bar of the City of New York, Charles E. Hughes, Julius Henry Cohen, Isaac N. Mills, and Chancellor James F. Fielder of New Jersey.

The Social and Living Conditions Survey naturally divides into several heads: among them I will mention public health; housing; leisure time and recreation facilities; the environment of hospitals and custodial institutions. Shelby M. Harrison, Director of Surveys, Sage Foundation, is giving his entire time to the organization of this work. One typical subdivision, that of public health, has been placed under the supervision of Dr. Hermann M. Biggs, aided by a group of authorities including among others Dr. George David Stewart, President, Academy of Medicine, Dr. Walter B. James, Dr. Josephine Baker, Dr. Thomas W. Salmon, Miss Clara D. Noyes, Dr. Winford Smith and Dr. William H. Welch of Johns Hopkins.

It is not necessary to say more in illustration of our method. Never before, I believe, has a City Plan been approached in just this deliberate way: preceded by inquiries so comprehensive. The results of these inquiries will be published from time to time—not voluminous reports covering the whole range of human knowledge on each subject—but authoritative, carefully edited and, we hope, brief reports, strictly limited to those phases of each subject of vital concern to city planners.

As Executive Secretary, the Committee has enlisted Frederick P. Keppel, former Dean of Columbia College, and former Assistant Secretary of War. Mr. Keppel will leave his present post with the International Chamber of Commerce in Paris and move to New York in September, and will be assisted by

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Flavel Shurtleff, Secretary of the National Conference on City Planning, with offices in the Sage Foundation Building.

The Committee will include among its general counselors and advisers such citizens as Elihu Root, Alfred E. Smith, Herbert Hoover, A. C. Bedford, Irving T. Bush, William Fellowes Morgan, Frederick B. Pratt, Nicholas Murray Butler, Mrs. Otto Wittpen, Hugh Frayne, Virginia Gildersleeve, Morgan J. O'Brien, Amey Aldrich, John J. Carty, Frances Perkins, Lawson Purdy, Mary E. Dreier, Felix Warburg, Darwin P. Kingsley and Lillian D. Wald. Instantly there come to mind the names of public officials whom we would wish to have on any list of advisers. Mr. de Forest has, however, well stated our desire not to embarrass or involve them, at this juncture, in what is essentially a private venture in cooperation, engaged in by private citizens who have become deeply interested in the high cost of *not* planning. But public officials too are citizens and neighbors and friends, and as such we shall endeavor to keep them fully informed of our activities and freely seek their comment and advice.

Planning for so wide an area and on so large a scale requires group judgment. The group certainly will include the Architect, the Engineer, the Lawyer, the Painter, the Sculptor, the Landscape Architect, the Social Worker, the Economist and the Business Man. And the work itself will develop and discover the man, the Planner, to lead that group. He is here, the spiritual descendant of Pierre L'Enfant, of Charles McKim, of Daniel Burnham. We shall find him and that group will depict for us the New York of a hundred years hence, a city great not merely in numbers, but great in that all its citizens, the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, can take just pride in its power

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and its beauty, can share in those durable satisfactions of life which are the natural outgrowth of orderly thinking and wise planning.

HERBERT HOOVER:

The action of the Trustees of the Russell Sage Foundation in providing for the survey by engineers and other experts of the economic and social situation, and the preparation of a comprehensive Plan for the development of New York City and its Environs deserves the highest commendation.

The enormous losses in human happiness and in money which have resulted from lack of city plans which take into account the conditions of modern life, need little proof. The lack of adequate open spaces, of playgrounds and parks, the congestion of streets, the misery of tenement life and its repercussions upon each new generation, are an untold charge against our American life. Our cities do not produce their full contribution to the sinews of American life and national character. The moral and social issues can only be solved by a new conception of city building.

The great growth of industry since New York was originally planned presents a host of new problems. The cost of distribution of necessities within the boundaries of the city increases each year until today the congestion, the inadequate system of terminals of transportation and commodity distribution generally tax New York with ten or fifteen per cent upon the cost of living above more adequately served centers.

Many of our industries are seasonal. If we are to secure high living standards and to gain in national productivity, these industries must be so interlocked as to give more continuous employment. The fact that New York has at all times the largest

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proportion of unemployment of any of our cities is due partially to this ill adjustment.

New York is the gateway of Europe into the United States, and the dumping of great hordes of people into our slums is a poor introduction to Americanization.

One part of such a plan must be a realization of each economic group in the community as to its function to the whole great community of which it is a part. With this in mind, residential districts whose interests center largely around low cost of living and educational and recreational facilities would see their interests in better means of distribution and the development of public utilities. The manufacturing districts must find not only better aligned transportation but coordination to residential areas which can be developed upon human lines.

The survey can help arouse a consciousness of its needs on the part of each community and group within the whole territory. The cooperation of all groups must be enlisted if a workable plan is to be evolved. This is vital in surmounting the legal difficulties in the way of executing such a plan.

The vision of the region around New York as a well planned location of millions of happy homes and a better working center of millions of men and women grasps the imagination. A definite plan for its accomplishment may be only an ideal. But a people without ideals degenerates—one with practical ideals is already upon the road to attain them.

LILLIAN D. WALD:

This seems to me a most important first step towards the most important undertaking that I have heard of for many years. I believe that if it is carried out in logical sequence it will add greatly to the happiness of the people of New York.

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It links a practical, workable plan with the vision of a city conceived in understanding of the needs of many people, their homes and those matters most closely related to their daily life.

It rouses within me a hope that those who come after may profit by this responsibility for them and our remorse for past omissions. I am enthusiastic because I see the possibility of realizing a hope that lies deep in the hearts of all lovers of mankind, and particularly the lovers of little children—that it is possible to have a city beautiful, and that ugliness is entirely unnecessary.

I have felt some of that chagrin of which Secretary Hoover speaks: when the stranger comes to America, often with great ideals, he meets first the ugly, commercialized, unsocial—often anti-social—section of the city into which he moves. I fully understand that even a perfectly planned metropolitan area will not bring about the millenium; but organized, cooperative plans that bring people together, that comprehend the interrelationship of home and work, recreation and education, will make impossible the further growth of segregated, ugly quarters for racial groups or economic classes.

There is bound to develop among those entrusted with the plans, and the public through them, the conviction that no city is really dignified unless there is within it a consciousness that children can be brought up safely only if the homes are fit for children to be brought up in. And I see the experts in various phases of city life coming together for this great plan, weighing and appraising the elements that enter into the home and the shop.

As I sense the aspirations of anxious parents, I can say with them that we long for decent homes, for wholesome recreation, for proximity to employment, and for transportation facilities that do not make the coming and going from work to home a

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most unpleasant experience. We also aspire to schools and playgrounds placed with a conception of the distance that children can safely travel. And we hope for prohibition of the ugly commercialized houses which are only too flatteringly called "homes." A great plan that has the advantage of the counsel of experts in every field—not working as specialists but working together for the city made up of homes—will establish standards, and the necessary provisions and prohibitions will naturally follow.

Imagination soars to the ultimate possibilities of not only a physically planned city, but development of other measures that are akin to it. I see, for instance (perhaps because the problem of unemployment touches us now, and we have not forgotten that it has been called a "recurring cycle"), that a great city plan could be made available for giving employment for public works during periods of industrial idleness as a part of the thought-out plan, and not promoted in times of excitement and without long and adequate study.

I see also in the plan, lastly but by no means of least consequence, recognition of the need of beauty; a need that exists, whether consciously or unconsciously, in the souls of people, even the least. Looking up Henry Street, the Woolworth Building can be seen in the distance. One of our children not long since, gazing westward, saw the beautiful building in the sunset light and, all unconsciously comparing that shining vision with the ugly, overcrowded, unclean, garbage-decorated houses about her, and obviously awed by the sight, exclaimed "Does God live there?"

We have beauty in the city—perhaps more than we deserve, because so much of it has either been accidental or due to the conception of an individual; but on the whole, beauty has not touched our homes, our industrial streets or our factories; not, I believe,

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through any prejudice against beauty, even for these functions and purposes of the city, but because the city, like Topsy, grew up, and a planless city inevitably becomes a city of specialization, not a coordinated social structure.

JOHN J. CARTY:

For more than thirty years, I have been concerned as an engineer in a responsible way with the making of economic surveys and development studies forecasting the telephonic development for New York City and other cities of the United States, and in the making of fundamental plans based upon these forecasts. These studies and plans require special inquiries into the future growth, character and distribution of population and business, and, notwithstanding all of the sources of error to which such studies and plans are obviously subject, they have proved to be of immense practical value.

A definite, though broad, fundamental plan for our city and its environs will make possible the growth of an harmonious system of urban and country communities, embodying an organic idea making for unity and utility and beauty. Thus may be avoided the colossal blunders and incalculable financial losses due to an incongruous assemblage of discordant elements which would result from following a random policy with no adequate and authoritative plan to guide. Such a plan eliminates at once the costly errors of inconsistency and, if it is kept constantly under review as it should be, it can be intelligently modified as time goes on, so as to meet with a minimum of difficulty those unforeseen contingencies which must always be expected in every project looking far into the future, and involving so many complex and uncertain factors.

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From my interest in the making of telephone plans for the future, it has come about that I have had an excellent opportunity of observing the preliminary work of the Committee, and of becoming acquainted with their ideals and methods of approach. I have also considered with much care the report of the Committee which has just been read, relating to the Plan of New York and Its Environs, and as the result of this I am well persuaded that the project as outlined is a sound one. It is proposed on a broad, comprehensive and open-minded basis, and I feel sure that it sets forth an objective which it is practicable to attain, provided that the great work of planning is placed in the right hands. But on this score I have no misgivings, for nowhere else outside of New York and its Environs could we so readily command the best thought of engineers, artists, and architects, public servants, social workers, economists and far-seeing men of affairs.

I feel sure that this project, so sanely and so magnificently conceived, will receive the support and active cooperation of all such as these, and that it will enable New York worthily to fulfill its destiny as the foremost city in all the world.

ELIHU ROOT:

I have come here not to tell you what is going to be done, but simply to express my warm sympathy with the Plan and my great appreciation of the labors and the interest and the devotion of the gentlemen who have undertaken this work.

For fifty-seven years now I have lived on the gridiron like St. Lawrence, on that gridiron laid down upon this island by the commissioners of 1811, who arbitrarily laid out our rectangular streets up and down and across the island without any reference to the topography of the land, and I have seen the city grow from

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less than a million to its present enormous proportions. It isn't as pleasant a place to live in as it was. With the growth of the city has come great crowding, most uncomfortable crowding. The conditions under which young men and women get to and from their work in the morning and evening are most disagreeable, hardly decent, and in the business parts of the city it is difficult to get light and air and even steerage way through the streets. It isn't only there; it is in parts of the city where the greater portion of the population live that the conditions are most distressing. I have been in the habit of saying that I do not think one can obtain a virile and dominant race where the children have paving stones between themselves and the earth.

This project is in some degree to ameliorate those conditions for the future. Not only is life in business overcrowded and hampered, but the conditions of distribution make living exceedingly expensive. New York is no place to live for any one with small means. Most extravagant incomes are necessary to enable any one to live here now as well as a person of very small means can live in one of our smaller towns.

We haven't quite succeeded in building a city. Something is wrong about it. The gridiron hasn't worked satisfactorily. It is worth while to try to find out what the trouble is. In the first place, the difference between a very large collection of human beings in a small territory and a small collection of them, between a big city and a small town, is not so much a difference in degree as it is a difference in kind. When you pass from your small town to your big town, you get problems, difficulties, injurious conditions, entirely different in kind from those that exist in the small town, and they ought to be dealt with intelligently.

A city is a growth. It is not the result of political decree or control. You may draw all the lines you please between counties

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and states, a city is a growth responding to forces not at all political, quite disregarding political lines. It is a growth like that of a crystal responding to forces inherent in the atoms that make it up.

And the force from which that growth comes is the force of individual enterprise, based on the desire for movement, the desire for a living, for wealth, for comfort, for society, all these desires existing in the hearts and acting on the minds of a vast number of units. That is the great force of life; that is the great force of modern civilization, and that is the thing that government can't imitate. That is why the government could not run the railroads. That is why the government can't run the shipping. Because no Congress and no President can imitate or create a substitute for the net result of the infinite number of forces in individual human beings.

Those are the forces that build up a city. The individual human beings, in response to whose urge cities grow, never think about the conditions that are to be created by the bringing together of a great mass of other people like themselves. If we build a house, we build it in what we think is a convenient and a comfortable, pleasant place to have a home. A thousand others, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, all have the same idea, but nobody thinks about the water supply; nobody thinks about the sewerage; nobody thinks what it is going to cost to deliver coal there; nobody thinks how far it is going to be from market; nobody thinks about the multitude of difficulties that are created by a great aggregation of human beings within a small territory. As a result, the growth of the city is without any intelligent thought whatever regarding the great difficulties that a city has to meet.

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There is one other quite important influence added to this incessant reaching out for homes, and following the homes with stores, with schools, with hospitals, all without any thought about the fundamental needs of a city; and that is the real estate operator in pursuit of his honorable business. He gets hold of tracts of land here and there which he can map and cut up into blocks and building lots and advertise and sell. He is the man who very largely determines the growth of a city. He isn't thinking about the difficulties the city will meet. He is thinking about the people he can induce to come and buy the lots and build houses on them.

Now, growth can be directed, just as trees can be trained and pruned and made to grow this way or that; if they are wanted for particular purposes they can be adapted to those purposes. This project is to get an intelligent idea of how the growth of this city in the future may be directed, with common and general judgment about the way in which it is desirable that it should grow, so that it will meet as fully as possible the difficulties that are inseparable from mass human life. I think the project is practicable. I think that the existence of plans known to everybody will give just enough direction to the movement of the multitude of separate impulses to lead the growth along the right lines.

One of the distressing things about this town is that architects have the greatest difficulty in securing immortality through their works. An architect designs a noble building, it is erected, and in a few years somebody comes along and pulls it down to build something else. It is discovered that it was in the wrong place; it wasn't located with reference to any intelligent idea about how the city ought to grow and was going to grow. My

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heart has often ached to see buildings destroyed which I thought were going to carry down to future generations the names of friends of mine who had designed and erected them.

Now we see the difficulties from the lack of plan in the development of the city in the past hundred years. What these gentlemen are doing now isn't going to make much difference to most of us, but it is going, so far as we help it, to pay our debt to the future; it is going, so far as we help it, to give to the future generations who occupy this great city some good things that they will inherit from us. It isn't only the city, it isn't only the state, it is this great country, for this city is an agency of the whole country. The city exists because it has a great country behind it. It doesn't exist for itself. It lives because it discharges a distinct function for all the people of America. Today it isn't discharging that function creditably. This project when carried out, I think, will enable it to render the service that is expected from it, and in return for which incalculable wealth is poured into it, and to deserve the dignity and the honor befitting the great Republic for which it is the metropolis.

If this project is supported and developed and made public, if it strikes the imagination of the people and receives the support of the public authorities and of public opinion, we may believe that our children and our children's children will see a great metropolis in which there may be homes where children can see the sun and breathe the air and grow up in strength and beauty, instead of the tenement house life that disgraces our civilization. The people living in the city give up all the beauties of nature, all the wonders of the fields and the forests and the mountain and the sea; but they may see a city where men find life worth living among nobly planned and adequately spaced and harmoniously related streets and open spaces and architectural monuments.

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Did it ever occur to you that in the City of New York we never approach anything that is beautiful and noble? We are always going by such things. There are many great and noble buildings, noble works of art, but we are always passing by them. You have to turn your head to see them. In the one city of America that had a plan, in the city for which Washington secured the advantage of that sense of design in which the French are so superior, in the person of L'Enfant, wherever you go you have before your eyes something noble and beautiful. Here the fine things are by-products, they are sideshows.

I hope for our city in the future that the immense increment to human happiness, which comes from the cultivation of tastes, may be gratified and nourished by laying before the people, always, objects that are noble and beautiful, that will ennoble and beautify character, so that the people of this great city will contribute to the character of America not weakness, but strength and vigor.

CHARLES DANA GIBSON *presented the following resolution:*

Resolved, that in the opinion of this conference of men and women interested in the welfare of New York and its vicinity, the need of a comprehensive regional Plan of New York and its Environs is manifest.

That this conference approve the action of the Committee in undertaking a series of Studies—legal; physical; industrial and economic; social—looking toward the formulation of such a Plan.

That it is the belief of this conference that only by united and continued effort and by the fullest cooperation on the part of all concerned can such a Plan be prepared and carried into effect.

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MRS. AUGUST BELMONT:

I should like to have the privilege of seconding that Resolution. This whole project is one that will appeal very, very deeply to all the women citizens of New York. I feel reasonably sure that the Directors will want the women to help with this City Plan; every movement in America today seems to desire the assistance of women.

Mr. de Forest very modestly minimized the beauty of the project and laid strong emphasis on what the plan would mean to the promotion of health and the improvement of order in the general surroundings of the city. After all, what could be more beautiful than health? Order too has a beauty of its own; therefore, I think the conception of the 'city beautified and beautiful' is the idea that will particularly appeal to the women.

During the last few years we have heard a great many appeals in New York, if anyone has a 'cause' they bring it here. New York is always open-handed and ready to help in any and every good project. We have witnessed the most marvellous generosity on the part of New Yorkers, generosity that would make one proud of the great heart of our city entirely aside from its other qualities, but in all these causes for which appeals have been made, not any has contained more inspiration than this one. In fact, this is the only one that has seemed essentially for New York. Most appeals are based upon some tragedy—war, with its terrible power for destruction; disaster, and the relief of suffering; but it is quite wonderful that this project has for its purpose and its goal—beauty. New York is a city with many natural beauties; it has great advantages, but it also has the disadvantages of its greatness. We have so many main streets that we lack a *Main Street*. We have so many interests that we lack a community interest, a common cause; in other words, we lack

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community spirit. I think this idea of the City Plan is the greatest common cause for which all New Yorkers can unite; but we must remember that no matter what the enthusiasm and the ability may be of the men who are going to direct it, the project is absolutely impossible of success unless we all get together and stand behind it. This is the only way the idea can absolutely be made real.

New York has grown so rapidly; the city represents little villages here, and big interests there. I would like to see us all gather round this plan and bring a new and genuine community feeling to bear upon its development. It is a great vision, and we should be deeply grateful to those who conceived it. Personally, I feel that when little children are taught their prayers, and say "God bless father; God bless mother," they should add "God bless the men and women who have vision," for in their hands lies the future of the race.

MR. DE FOREST:

The resolution is unanimously carried and on the behalf of the Sage Foundation I want to thank all those who have come here this evening in response to this invitation. It is a great encouragement to have this degree of interest displayed. What we want and what is necessary if there is to be accomplishment here is the cooperation of all of you, suggestions from all of you who have any constructive suggestions to make, and cooperation not only from those who are in this audience but from all others who may learn of this project.

